
Update (30.09.02)

New Coalition join stand at Woodside

The report below details the new coalition of organizations pledged to help stop the eviction of families from WOODSIDE caravan park.

The Traveller Law Reform Coalition will campaign for new legislation bringing provision of both council-owned and privately-owned caravan parks - like Woodside.

We believe that by opposing the destruction of WOODSIDE attention can be focused on the need for the Traveller Law Reform Bill.

Following this, we are sending out another email with news that Mid Beds Council have served EVICTION NOTICE to take effect on 1st NOVEMBER.

Please be prepared therefore to come to WOODSIDE at Hatch, near Sandy, off the A1 (Bedfordshire) on that day - a Friday.

We are also asking those who can to come up night before and camp with us.

Grattan Puxon

Update (30.09.02)

The Gypsy Council Mobile Office At Woodside

The Gypsy Council at its last meeting resolved to open a mobile office at Woodside. By this act the Gypsy Council wishes to show support and solidarity with the Travellers of Woodside. The office will also give clerical support to the residents of Woodside in their campaign to keep their homes. The office will be operated three days a week by myself and other Gypsy Council members and in fact opened today. This message is being written from Woodside.

Last Saturday at a historic meeting of Traveller groups, Irish, English and Scottish Travellers united to form the Traveller Law Reform Coalition to campaign for the Traveller Law Reform Bill. At the meeting a plan of action was mapped out, which includes parliamentary initiatives involving MPs that support the bill from the Liberal, Conservative and Labour Party. As part of the

campaign for reform it was resolved that it was important to highlight the plight of Travellers like those at Woodside and other such sites in danger of losing their homes.

Last night Cliff Codona spoke on the Edwina Currie Show on Radio 5 about Woodside. Also appearing on the show was Bryan E Collier Conservative leader of Mid Bedfordshire Council, who on the programme clearly stated that the eviction would take place on the 1/11/2002. That warning was again clearly spelt out first thing this morning when a group of men accompanied by the police posted eviction notices on caravans. For the Travellers of Woodside this was a traumatic experience. Cliff Codona stated

"I am disgusted by this action today, do these people not realise that losing your home is a disturbing and stressful experience, a phone call informing me that they were coming would have been a common act of decency. Instead I have to look out of my caravan window by chance and see men posting eviction notices with a police car outside my trailer. I deeply resent the police being called here by Mid Bedfordshire Council and their solicitors. Violence and aggression has never been shown to council officials or their agents. I sit on police committees in Bedfordshire, I have excellent relations with the police in Bedfordshire".

Whilst the eviction was being served Paul Griffiths the Leader of the Labour group in Mid Bedfordshire, who has been to Woodside before and has stoutly opposed the eviction, came and pledged his continued support for Woodside and promised to do everything in his power to stop the eviction.

Regards,

Andrew Ryder

Update (12.09.02)

A letter from Janie Codona

* * * * *

Thanks for all your support and we hope you can be with us when the council come with their tractors and diggers to try and haul us off here. That'll be around 1 November, as you know.

I'll have a cup of tea ready for you!

You are thinking perhaps we are mad because we refuse to leave >Woodside< and go on living with a death sentence hanging over our heads all the time. But we must fight on and continue as normal for the sake of our future. If not we know only too well the price we will pay.

The thought of being homeless and on the side of the road fills us with fear,

<http://www.f-f-t.demon.co.uk/fft/WOODSIDE.HTM>

especially us mothers of Woodside. I myself, as a mother and grandmother am worried sick.

Our families will be put at risk if they should - despite all our efforts and yours - succeed in getting us out. After what happened to those two little girls at Soham, I feel the roadside can't be a safe place to live any more.

There are a considerable number of new families on Woodside now. About 25 in addition to the 27 original owner-families. We have a large number of children attending schools - plus ten on a waiting list for places.

Cliff is in the process of setting up an under sixteens' football team, to play matches on our Green with other teams. This is part of the new London area Gypsy football league.

This is a great step forward - but it will all come to nothing if the Mid Beds Council has its way. We want school and sports to continue. And these new families need HOMES.

Not houses, not temporary accommodation - but together and allowed to stay in the extended family group. Be that at Woodside, or on several other new sites.

The council has two options: build us some new sites or let us keep Woodside. We are not the "problem"; we are the solution, offering a cheaper and more viable option.

The answer can't be to make more Gypsies like us homeless. The answer must lie in the Traveller Law Reform Bill, that will see more council sites and more privately-owned caravan parks set up around the country.

I'm worried for our children who are the innocent victims of this council madness; worried for our menfolk trying to provide for us as well as battling to keep our homes; worried for our sanity in this turmoil with the ever increasing threat looming nearer each day, as we approach 1 November.

Still the Mid Beds Council offer no solution other than the roadsides.

PLEASE HELP US KEEP UP OUR SPIRITS and draw a red ring around that date on the calendar - be with us on 1 November (or whenever they come). **JOIN THE "RED ALERT"** to save Woodside from the bulldozers.

We are at Hatch, near Sandy, on the A1 in Bedfordshire.

You can join the RED ALERT phone network by sending your number to: ustiben.2@ntlworld.com or calling (mornings) 01206 523 528

We reckon there will be 500 of us, with supporters including several clergymen,

[Close Window](#)

Woodside

Update (16.10.02)

Woodside prepares to resist eviction

Travellers at Woodside caravan park are making a stand against what they see as "ethnic-cleansing" by Mid Beds Council.

Eviction notices have been served for 1 November. While some people named in the planning case have moved out, more have moved on to Woodside to join Cliff and Janie Codona and the other plot-owners. There are 50 caravans and some 60 vehicles on the 17-acres of land at present.

"We are not leaving for one simple reason," says Janie. "It's too dangerous for our children out on the road."

Supporters on the RED ALERT - please join us on Friday morning, 1 November, at Woodside, Hatch, near Sandy (off the A1 in Bedfordshire).

"We will muster at the gate on 1 November to show our opposition and determination," Cliff says. "Thanks to all who can join us that morning."

London supporters are catching the 9.36 am train from Kings Cross, arriving at SANDY at 10.30, from where there will be lifts to Woodside.

Groups are coming from Bedford, Cambridge, Leicester and Luton.

Please make yourself a "STOP ETHNIC CLEANSING POSTER" and bring pots and pans for noise. Hot tea and homemade wine will be served! A good bonfire will be burning too.

Some people may be able to join the protest the evening before at Mid Beds Council offices, when a final council meeting is taking place with an appeal to call off the eviction.

This starts at 6.30 pm at Dunstable Road, AMPHILL, just south of Bedford (31 October). From there some of us are going back to Woodside to spend the night - huts, tents and caravans will accommodate supporters (bring sleeping bags - and own tent if possible).

Phone 01206 523 528 if you are planning to come.

Grattan Puxon
Gypsy Council/Roma Federation

to protest and if possible stop the council carrying out this madness.

"MUMS WITH KIDS HERE. LEAVE US ALONE!"

Not you! The council. They want to evict us.

Come November 1st, Mid Beds Council (nasty Tory lot) intend to chuck us out on the road. "Go and live on a lay-by", they said in the High Court. All 200 of us.

No matter our kids are going to school. And we bought this place ourselves, to settle down.....We'd like to get them under the Race Relations Act and Human Rights!

We're Romanies see, and SUPPOSED to have rights. But they still deny us a place to live. It's coming down now to a sort of ethnic-cleansing - right in the middle of England's green and pleasant land.

We bought 17-acres of it, because the government said we should set up our own caravan parks (The council's don't have to any more, since they brought in that Criminal Justice Act).

WOODSIDE is our home. Lovely spot in Hatch, near Sandy, off the A1 in Bedfordshire. Only someone in Hatch wants to build a row of posh detached houses here. So we must go.

BUT WE THINK WE CAN STOP THEM. WE ARE GOING TO STICK - AND MAKE OUR STAND HERE. NOT JUST FOR OURSELVES BUT FOR THE HOMELESS AND NEEDY EVERYWHERE.

WILL YOU JOIN US?

Tents and campfires, and cups of tea, is all we can provide you. But you will be lining up (we say) on the right side of our barricades against injustice, intolerance and racism.

A hundred good people have already added their names to the RED ALERT "Cascade", willing to come to Woodside on getting a phone call to say the eviction attempt is starting (or coming up to stop with in the Tent City the night before).

SEND IN YOUR NUMBER and PLEASE PUT THIS MESSAGE OUT FOR US!

[Email](#) or phone 01206 523 528 (mornings)"

Posted on behalf of Janie Codona
National Travellers Action Group, Woodside

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